

## Commander's Guidance for Senior Leader Ethics Education

### **EXPLORATION TOPIC: HONORING THE PUBLIC TRUST**

The intent for this module, *Honoring the Public Trust*, is to provide a platform of study and engagement with peers that will enhance understanding of trust as the foundational requirement for all Army relationships and the effects of the Army as a Profession on 'Trust.' The American people place special trust and confidence in the Army as a profession that considers service to the Nation as its highest priority. 'Trust is the bedrock' of the Army's relationship with the American people. Our professional responsibility is to preserve this earned trust by upholding and honoring the high standards that the American people expect. Our moral obligation is not a product of social trust but rather the source of that social trust. Internal to the Army, individual trustworthiness creates strong bonds among Army professionals that serves as a vital organizing principle necessary for the Army to function as an effective and ethical profession. Army leaders develop its essential characteristics to ensure the Army earns and maintains its trust with the American people. Senior Army leaders in particular have a direct stewardship responsibility through their engagement in the Army's civil-military relations.

In order to provide insight into the effects of these issues on the Army Profession, the module recommends an "evaluation of the Army Profession and the Army Ethic as the basis for internal and external trust relationships."

The first investigation area is the Army Profession's constitutional subordination to the government and the importance of Civil Military relations. What is the Army's constitutional role? What are the obligations of Army professionals? What are civil Military relationships? Why is subordination to the government necessary?

The second area for investigation is to examine the natural tensions that exist between the necessary subordination to political entities and the Army Professions' expertise. Civilian control of the military is the mechanism by which the American people, through their elected and appointed officials, exercise control of the military. It is embedded in our Constitution and serves as the cornerstone of the military's relationship with the American people and our government. Military professionals have unique expertise and their input is vital to formulating and executing effective policy and strategy. Consequently, Army leaders have a duty to ensure that the military perspective is in all appropriate forums. What are the challenges for Army Senior Leaders that have more expert knowledge than the elected officials they are subordinate to, and, in those relationships, to candidly and professionally present Army perspectives?

The third area for investigation examines the methods to reconcile the natural tension between the necessary subordination to political entities and the Army Professions' expertise through candor and respect within a professional relationship. What are the key conditions for effective American civil-military relations is a high level of mutual respect and trust between civilian and military leaders? How are mutual respect and trust developed/maintained?

The fourth area for investigation examines the importance of Trust in relationships that exist between the Army and the American people and in all Civil-Military relations. What are the strategies to develop and maintain public trust?

Together with the foundational modules, *The Army Profession as Our Unifying Purpose and Context* and *Investing in Character Development*, this module promotes learning in the higher categories of the cognitive and affective domains. Learning new material, applying the learning, and engaging in topic discussion is the suggested method.